



Rural Partners...

a newsletter of the Indiana Rural Development Council

Spring 2002

AmeriCorps VISTA Program Can Assist Rural Communities

Could you use a hand in improving the quality of life of the residents in your community? By participating in the AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program, you could gain an energetic employee who works as an organizer, a builder

and a catalyst for change in addressing poverty at the local level.

For 35 years, AmeriCorps* VISTA has worked successfully to bring individuals out of poverty. Today, nearly 6,000 AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve in hundreds of nonprofit organizations and public agencies throughout the country — working to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, increase housing opportunities, or bridge the digital divide. They leave behind lasting solutions to some of our country's toughest problems.

"This is your opportunity to develop a project and a program that meets your community's needs," said Tom Haskett, director of the Indiana Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service. "It is all yours to create, nurture and bring to life."

AmeriCorps*VISTA project sponsors may be federal, state, or local agencies, or private, nonprofit organizations with a 501 (c) designation. Sponsors must be able to direct the project, supervise the AmeriCorps* VISTAs and provide necessary administrative support to complete the goals and objectives of the project.

As a cost-share partner, organizations contribute the living allowance — about \$9,500 for each AmeriCorps*VISTA member. This contribution does not need to be provided up front, and is an excellent way to leverage additional funding resources from commu-

nity foundations, government funding sources and local corporations.

"AmeriCorps is offering a great opportunity for Hoosier communities to help themselves," said Wendy Dant Chesser, IRDC's executive director. "Many of Indiana's larger communities are utilizing this program, and we hope rural Indiana communities will take advantage of it as well."

AmeriCorps*VISTA volunteers are assigned for one year, full-time, to a community to work its proposed project. Benefits include training, a living allowance and health insurance. Additionally, volunteers can



AMERICORPS

GIVE BACK FOR A YEAR. SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY. CHANGE YOUR LIFE.

receive an education award of \$4,725, which can be used to help pay for college, graduate school, vocational training, or to pay off student loans.

To explore bringing an AmeriCorps volunteer to your community, contact Haskett in Indianapolis at (317) 226-6724 or via e-mail at IN@cns.gov.

Mission

The Indiana Rural Development Council (IRDC) is a partnership of local, state, federal, profit and not-for-profit stakeholders serving Indiana communities. The IRDC's purpose is to coordinate efforts of citizens and governments to meet the economic and social needs of rural Indiana.

Goals

- To provide a means to address rural issues;
- To seek community input to identify problems;
- To establish partnerships to find solutions;
- To enable partners to take action; and
- To educate the public on rural issues.

Visit the IRDC Web site at: www.in.gov/irdc



LOCAL SECTOR

The Honorable William H. Graham* - Chair
Mayor, City of Scottsburg
 David Hess
Elkhart County Administrator
 The Honorable Richard M. Ullrich, Jr.
Mayor, City of Aurora
 Chuck Andres (a)
President, St. Leon Town Council

STATE SECTOR

The Honorable Joseph E. Kernan*
Indiana Lieutenant Governor
 Rob Clark
Indiana Office of the Attorney General
 James Segedy
Ball State University
 Michaela Kendall (a)
Indiana Department of Commerce

FEDERAL SECTOR

Robert White*
USDA Rural Development
 William Shaw
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
 Janice Wolfe
U.S. Small Business Administration

FOR PROFIT SECTOR

John Thompson*
Midwest Engineers
 James Rice
EMC of Indiana LLC
 Steven Seifert
Bonar Group
 Sanjay Patel, P.E. (a)
VS Engineering

NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR

Judy Gray*
Orange County Economic Development Partnership
 Tom Morton
Indiana Association of Cities and Towns
 Dr. David Rice
Southern Indiana Rural Development Project
 Matt Wirth (a)
Scott County Economic Development Corporation

LEGISLATIVE & SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

The Honorable Johnny Nugent (R), State Senator,
 Lawrenceburg
 The Honorable Richard D. Young, Jr. (D), State
 Senator, Milltown
 The Honorable William Friend (R), State Representa-
 tive, Macy
 The Honorable Claire Leuck (D), State Representa-
 tive, Fowler
 Lane A. Ralph, Representing U.S. Senator Richard
 Lugar's Office
 Mike Edmondson, Representing U.S. Senator Evan
 Bayh's Office
 Bruce Paul, Representing U.S. Congressman Baron
 Hill's Office
 Brandt Hershman, Representing U.S. Congressman
 Steve Buyer's Office
 Kermit Burrous, Past Chair

IRDC STAFF

Wendy Dant Chesser, Executive Director
 Laura Gibbons, IRDC/IACI Intern

*Executive Committee

(a) Alternate Member

A Message from the Executive Director

Wendy Dant Chesser

As you all know, rural communities today face many challenges. From land use decisions, to downtown revitalization and industrial development, local leaders are looking for ways to improve the quality of life for their rural residents. One

common element links the success in all communities who achieve it: **leadership**.

Throughout 2002 each issue of *Rural Partners* will include a **Leadership Spotlight** (see page 5) article. IRDC's Leadership Development Task Force has taken on the task of finding a leadership development opportunity to share with our members in the newsletter.

The IRDC can help you reach your community goals. We can show you how other communities are achieving success and we can point you in the right direction for financial and technical assistance. We can be your cheerleader.

The key to your success: *leadership* from within your community. And it may even start with you.

Wendy

"If you don't like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time."

— Marian Wright Edelman

Need Infrastructure Assistance?

The Environmental Infrastructure Working Group (EIWG) will meet on the first Wednesday of each month for the remainder of 2002. These meetings begin at 10 a.m. at the IRDC office, 150 W. Market Street, Suite 414, Indianapolis. To schedule your community's project, call the IRDC at (317) 232-8776.

Farmers' Markets: The Dos and Don'ts

Southern Indiana Rural Development Project hosts a conference on developing a successful farmers' market in your community

Farmers' markets have long been used to help farmers increase produce sales within their

local communities. To help farmers get the most out of their markets, an upcoming March workshop offers an examination of the best practices for germinating and growing successful ventures.

The **Farmers' Market Workshop**, hosted by the Southern Indiana Rural Development Project (SIRDP), will take place on Wednesday, March 20, at 10 a.m. at the Venture Out Center, 975 Industrial Drive, in Madison. This one-day seminar will focus on both the establishment and operation of productive farmers' markets, as well as the regulations and liabilities associated with these activities.



The workshop content is geared toward produce growers, community organizations — including local convention and visitors' bureaus, economic development organizations, main street organizations, and county health department officials.

"Our intent is to examine how a well-organized farmers' market can benefit both farmers and the surrounding communities," said Bud Beesley, Jennings County farmer and SIRDP member. "Breakout sessions will be geared toward the community organizers of the markets and the farmers who hope to participate. We will highlight examples of successful farmers' markets from around Indiana."

"There are some good farmers' markets around the state, but some are still struggling," said Chuck

Andres, St. Leon Town Council president. "We hope this workshop will allow those needing a little boost to learn from those who are doing it right."

SIRDP is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the rural counties of southern Indiana.

Sponsoring organizations include the Southeastern Indiana Small Business Development Center, the Indiana Rural Development Council, Historic Hoosier Hills Resource, Conservation and

Development District, Purdue Cooperative Extension Service and USDA Rural Development.

Registration for the **Farmers' Market Workshop** is only \$15 if received by March 10 and it includes lunch. Participants can register at the door for \$20. Seating is limited, so sign up early.

Registration forms and detailed agendas are available by contacting Matt Weber, SIRDP, at (800) 816-0019 or via e-mail at mdweber@s-d-g.com.



A farmers' market is a great way to provide locally-grown fresh produce to consumers. It also brings rural and city residents together. There are 167 farmers' markets listed on the Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture Web site at: www.in.gov/oca.

IRDC Shirts for Sale

Show your support for the Indiana Rural Development Council. IRDC golf shirts are available for only \$15 (plus shipping)! Available sizes are adult medium, large, extra large and XX large. Contact the IRDC at (317) 232-8776 to place your order. Orders also can be e-mailed to the IRDC at wdant@commerce.state.in.us.





Explore Land Use Issues on the Ultimate Farmland Preservation Tour

Plans are in the works for the last trip to Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey to observe land use tools being used in the eastern United States. Scheduled for April 4-8, 2002, this will be the eighth and final tour.

Over 160 Hoosiers representing 57 counties in Indiana have participated in the seven previous trips.

The tour provides an in-depth, first-hand educational experience designed to empower community and state leaders to address land use trends. It reviews purchase of development rights and transfer of development rights (PDR & TDR), growth boundaries, new urban design, agriculture districts and other tools.

Participants will have the opportunity to ask planners, builders/developers, local elected officials and others about how these tools are working in their communities. Experts will talk about the positives and negatives, the advantages and disadvantages, and the



challenges they face with programs they utilize every day.

The tour is a great way to gain a level of understanding about options in a very short period of time. "It is important that we help local and state leaders understand the scope of land use issues, and this is a great way to do it," said Joe Tutterrow, director of the Indiana Land Resources Council.

"Indiana participants will bring ideas back home and share them with others in their communities. We must build the base and develop momentum at the community level so sound land use decisions can be made," Tutterrow said.

For more information on the tour, check out the ILRC Web site at www.in.gov/oca/ilrc/tour.html, or contact Janet Evans, Indiana Farm Bureau, (317) 692-7851.

USDA Rural Development Adds Loan Specialists

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development has announced the addition of two loan specialists. They will serve rural Indiana under the agency's Rural Business-Cooperative Service program.

The two individuals will promote business program activity throughout the state. **Sandy Kaiser** is located in the Jasper, Ind., Rural Development office and has responsibility for the southern half of the state. **Anthony Kirkland** is in the Decatur, Ind., office with responsibility for the northern half of Indiana. Both Kaiser and Kirkland previously served as community development managers for USDA Rural Development.

The mission of the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) is to enhance the quality of life for all

rural Americans by providing leadership in building competitive businesses and cooperatives that can prosper in the global marketplace. To meet business credit needs in under-served areas, RBS Business Programs are usually leveraged with the resources of commercial, cooperative or other private-sector lenders. The division administers the following programs in Indiana:

- ♦ Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans
- ♦ Business and Industry Direct Loans
- ♦ Intermediary Relending Program Loans
- ♦ Rural Business Enterprise Grants
- ♦ Rural Business Opportunity Grants
- ♦ Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants

For more information on Rural Development's Business Programs call: Joseph Steele, Indianapolis, (317) 290-3100, ext. 427, Marlene Snell, Indianapolis, (317) 290-3100, ext. 428, Anthony Kirkland, Decatur, (219) 724-4124; or Sandy Kaiser, Jasper, (812) 482-1171.

Leadership Spotlight - Indiana Agricultural Leadership Institute

IALI Announces Upcoming Luncheon Programs

Issues impacting Indiana agriculture are the focus of upcoming agricultural forums sponsored by the Indiana Agricultural Leadership Institute,

Inc. (IALI). The forums will feature speakers from the state and national agricultural scene discussing topics significant to rural Indiana.

Lieutenant Governor Joe Kernan – March 27

Last fall, the O'Bannon-Kernan administration introduced a tax restructuring plan designed to protect homeowners and promote economic growth. Lieutenant Governor Joe Kernan, Indiana's commissioner of Agriculture, will discuss the plan and its journey through the Indiana General Assembly.

Mark Drabenstott, Ph.D., Center for the Study of Rural America – April 16

A native of Markle, Ind., Mark Drabenstott is a seasoned observer of the agricultural and rural economies who is recognized internationally for his economic analysis and policy insights. As vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Drabenstott serves as the director in charge of the Center for the Study of Rural America.

Other Dates:

September 16 — Dave Bossman, president, American Feed Industry Association.

December 3 — Clayton Yeutter, Former Secretary of Agriculture and U.S. Trade Representative.

To Be Announced — Senator Richard G. Lugar will discuss the 2002 Farm Bill.

The IALI was established in 1983. Its mission is to improve the agricultural community by fostering leadership development and facilitating communication among diverse interests on agricultural, food and natural resource issues. Each forum begins at noon and will be held at the Westin Hotel in downtown Indianapolis. For registration information, contact Beth Archer at (317) 745-0947 or via e-mail at ialiba@aol.com.

Enterprise Community Designation Pays Off for Austin

Progress continues to be made in the Austin area through the cooperative efforts of the Austin Rural Enterprise Community, local and county officials, economic development groups and residents in southeastern Indiana.

Such progress is making this Scott County area more attractive to business development and significantly improving the local quality of life. Two recent developments benefiting the area include:

Scott County Life Long Learning Center

Indiana Ninth District Congressman Baron Hill announced recently that the 2002 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill includes \$808,000 for the Scott County Life Long Learning Center.



The Scott County Life Long Learning Center was built in 2000 in the Rural Enterprise Community area by a partnership that included an Indiana Department of Commerce CFF grant of \$450,000, a Scott County Foundation/Lilly grant of \$931,000, \$300,000 from the City of Scottsburg, and the Scott County Partnership.

“With the challenges working people face today, I am pleased Congress recognizes the importance of funding education and job training programs,” Hill said. “This funding will help the Scott County Life Long Learning Center continue to grow and help Indiana develop a stronger workforce.”

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The funding will go toward a Scott County Life Long Learning Center program to train workers on actual

Plant Expansion in Austin

In the economic development arena, Pepsi Americas recently announced a major plant expansion in Austin.

A new product line is being added at the sprawling facility on the community's westside. It will add nearly one-third more onto the present plant — expanding it by another 50,000 square feet. It is estimated that \$10 million will eventually be spent at the plant on equipment and facilities.

Lanny McIntosh, Austin Town Council president and member of the Austin Rural Enterprise Community board of directors, was thrilled to hear the news.

“On behalf of the town, we are excited and thankful that Pepsi Americas has selected the Austin plant as the location of the Aquafina line.”

The Austin Town Council recently granted several tax abatements needed for the project. The expansion brings an estimated 32 new jobs to Scott County over the next two years.



equipment, provide continuing education for adults and offer literacy programs. The training program will utilize industrial equipment, computer and robotic technology and distance learning resources to equip and support the training program and provide the critical resources for workforce development.

“I understand that times are tough for a lot of Hoosiers,” Hill added. “Job training programs are crucial in making sure people can improve their skills, raise their standards of living and provide for their families.”



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IRDC Rural Partners

The deadline for the next issue is Thursday, May 2, 2002.

Submit articles to the IRDC at the address above or by e-mail to Wendy Dant Chesser at wdant@commerce.state.in.us.